



Department of Justice

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HOGSETT DISCUSSES FEDERAL COLLABORATION TO COMBAT SCOURGE OF METHAMPHETAMINE

*Hogsett commits U.S. Attorney's Office to assist in fight against methamphetamine
production, trafficking, and distribution*

PRESS RELEASE

EVANSVILLE – Joseph H. Hogsett, United States Attorney, held a press conference in Evansville this morning to discuss federal efforts to combat methamphetamine production, trafficking, and abuse in southwestern Indiana. The press conference came shortly after Hogsett met with law enforcement leadership in Evansville to discuss ways to further improve federal-local collaboration on issues relating to methamphetamine.

“The message I heard from law enforcement this morning is similar to what I have heard in all sixty counties of this district: methamphetamine is a scourge on our communities,” Hogsett said. “Meeting the challenge of this growing epidemic will take all hands on deck, and that’s why the U.S. Attorney’s Office is committed to doing all that it can to foster greater collaboration with our local partners when it comes to investigating and prosecuting meth cases.”

Hogsett noted several high-profile federal methamphetamine prosecutions that had taken place in the Evansville area in recent years, including:

- Operation “Wheelin and Dealin” – 2011
Latin American methamphetamine distribution organization in Evansville area
7 defendants charged federally, with approximately 3 pounds of meth seized
- Operation “Gift Horse” – 2011
Latin American methamphetamine distribution organization in Evansville area
12 defendants charged federally, with approximately 1.5 pounds of meth seized

- Operation “Push n Hang” – 2010
Latin American methamphetamine distribution organization in Evansville, Washington, and Vincennes areas
30 defendants charged federally, with approximately 2 pounds of meth seized
- Operation “Chandelier” – 2009
Latin American methamphetamine distribution organization in Evansville area
10 defendants charged federally, with approximately 6 pounds of meth seized
- Operation “Dirty Fowl” – 2008
Latin American methamphetamine distribution organization in Evansville area
33 defendants charged federally, with approximately 10 pounds of meth seized

Based on historical information, the above organizations accounted for a combined 465 pounds of methamphetamine trafficked in southwestern Indiana over the last five years. Hogsett contrasted these quantities with amounts of usable methamphetamine produced by the “one pot” production method. “One pot methamphetamine production in Evansville is dangerous and increasingly prevalent, but often results in no more than a few grams of usable drug,” Hogsett said.

“There is no quick and easy solution to the methamphetamine problem, with federal and local law enforcement each bringing different strengths to the fight,” Hogsett noted. “But I made clear this morning that our office will continue to prosecute meth traffickers when appropriate under federal law, with a particular focus on the large-scale drug rings that are importing huge amounts of methamphetamine from outside the country.”

Hogsett pointed to the success of the U.S. Attorney’s ongoing Violent Crime Initiative (VCI) as a way in which improved federal-local collaboration can produce significant results. Announced in March of 2011, the VCI represents a district-wide strategy to work with local law enforcement and county prosecutors to combat drug traffickers and criminals that use and carry firearms in their illegal activities. In the first nine months of the initiative, the VCI produced a dramatic increase in the number of gun-related charges brought federally – from just 14 felony possession charges in 2010 to 103 last year.

“I look forward to working with our partners here in Vanderburgh County and across this area of the state as we look for new, innovative ways to work together in the battle against this destructive drug,” Hogsett added. “And to those who continue to peddle violence and tragedy in Hoosier neighborhoods, those who continue to aid this cycle of death in any way, know that we will find you and you will face the stiffest penalties under the law.”

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